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UNCLAS KUWAIT 001752

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/TIP, NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PGOV ELAB KU

SUBJECT: HELP JUST A CALL AWAY: FOREIGN LABORERS TO PHONE  
IN COMPLAINTS

REF: A. KUWAIT 1732

B. KUWAIT 1729

Only days after the unprecedented laborer attack on the Bangladeshi Embassy (ref A,B), the GOK established a hotline that foreign laborers can use to lodge complaints against their employers. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor announced that the around-the-clock hotline, which began operation April 29, can receive complaints via telephone and fax. The hotline's primary function is to ensure that workers are being paid on time and in accordance with their labor contracts. Under Article 134 of the Kuwaiti labor law, any company delinquent in salary payments more than 15 days can be prosecuted. Punishments include reimbursing the workers from company deposits with the Ministry, freezing all business transactions between the company and any government entity and suspending the company's ability to sponsor new expatriate employees. The withholding of workers' salaries of up to five months precipitated the April 24 Bangladeshi revolt and more commonly afflicts the unskilled, Asian expatriate labor force.

LEBARON